

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 14NEW YORK POST  
14 October 1985

# WEINBERGER 'AGAINST' U.S. MISSION TO CAPTURE THEM

By NILES LATHAM  
Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger opposed the dramatic U.S. seizure of the Achille Lauro hijackers, warning it would "destroy our relations with Egypt," it was reported last night.

Weinberger repeatedly called President Reagan to try and block the plan, the reports said.

He argued that Navy jets might have to fire across the nose of the Air Egypt civilian jetliner.

It was learned that Reagan — in a startling breach of security — gave the go-ahead order on an unscrambled radio open line from Air Force One.

The conversation was reportedly picked up by a ham radio operator, according to the reports.

That was the only glitch in a well-planned intelligence operation that scored a major coup by pinpointing the terrorists' location and plans, officials told The Post.

Sources here disclosed for the first time the precise details of how the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, monitored the offices and phone calls of top Egyptian government officials to determine the location of the Achille Lauro hijackers.

According to the sources, U.S. officials had almost given up hope of capturing the murderers of New Yorker Leon Klinghoffer after the Egyptian government announced early Thursday that the hijackers had been given safe passage out of Cairo.

Later that morning, however, Mossad agents gave the CIA a



transcript of a Wednesday night meeting of high-level Egyptian officials.

The transcript proved that President Hosni Mubarak was lying.

The report showed that, during the heated meeting, Egyptian officials debated what to do with the hijackers — the first indication they were still in Egypt.

U.S. officials refused to say how the Israelis obtained the tran-

script, but there is speculation that the Mossad either bugged the office or had an agent in the room.

Within hours, sources said, U.S. intelligence knew about several radio messages and telephone conversations — some involving Mubarak — indicating the terrorists were being moved from the Port Said naval station to the Cairo airport.

Many of the intercepted conversations were between Egyptian officials and the PLO, sources said.

The U.S. also received advance information on the time that an Egypt Air 737 transporting the terrorists would take off, as well as its destination, flight plan, tail number and pilot's name, the sources said.